

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Beaver My Outdoors Challenge Award



Cub Animal Carer Activity Badge



Cub Gardener Activity Badge



Cub Naturalist Activity Badge

Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

Make a bug hotel

World Earth Day, 22 April Give insects a home by building them one at your meeting place

Time: 45 minutes

Equipment (enough for two bug hotels)

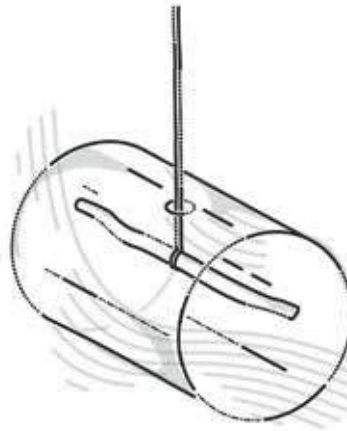
- A recycled plastic bottle (2l), cut in half, ends removed
- Twigs and small sticks
- Pine cones
- Bark
- Other materials like bamboo, broken bits of plant pots
- String
- Scissors

Instructions

1 Help your young people to make a simple bug hotel to keep outside your meeting place. Explain that this will create a habitat for beetles, woodlice, bees and other mini beasts and that insects are vital to our ecosystem. They can monitor the hotel to see which bugs move in and learn why helping insects is important for growing things.

2 Ask the young people to collect twigs, sticks and other natural materials. Explain that different materials attract different insects. For example, ladybirds live in cracks, crevices and leaf litter. Stag beetles and bark beetles like hanging out in dead wood.

3 Next, the sticks and twigs need to be snapped to size, so that they just stick out of the bottle. You will need enough for two hotels, one to hang and one to keep on the ground, for different insects.



4 Cut a length of string and tie it firmly around one of the sticks. Cut a small hole in the very centre of one of the halves of the plastic bottle and thread the string up through the hole. This can be used to hang the bug hotel from a tree or fence.

5 Starting with the stick that has the string tied around it, ask the young people to cram the bottles with the natural materials, mixing them up as they go.



The bottles should be packed tightly so that the contents don't fall out.

6 Once the bottles are full, hang one of the bug hotels from a tree or other high structure, and place the other one somewhere sheltered on the ground, like under a bush or in the corner of your outside space, where it won't get disturbed, tripped over or blown about.

7 To identify some common insects that could move into the bug hotels, and to find out what time of year you might see them, go to: wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates. There are some insects that young people should not touch because they bite, including red ants, earwigs and shield bugs.

8 The young people should monitor the bug hotels for at least three months to see what comes to live there – or a whole year to see different species through the seasons.

Take it further

Make a more elaborate mini-beast mansion using two wooden pallets stacked on top of each other and filling in the spaces with bricks, pieces of wood, dried grasses, bits of roof tile and other natural materials to create habitats for a wider variety of creatures.